MN 48 — MN 48 In Kosambī | Kosambiyā Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Text

In Kosambī

Kosambiyā Sutta (MN 48)

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Kosambī at Ghosita’s monastery. And on that occasion the monks in Kosambī were given to arguing and quarreling and disputing, stabbing one another with weapons of the mouth. They did not persuade one another, and did not agree to be persuaded by one another. They did not convince one another, and did not agree to be convinced by one another.1

Then a certain monk went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One: “Lord, the monks in Kosambī are now given to arguing and quarreling and disputing, stabbing one another

with weapons of the mouth. They don't persuade one another, and don't agree to be persuaded by one another. They don't convince one another, and don't agree to be convinced by one another.

Then the Blessed One told a certain monk, "Come, monk. In my name, call those monks, saying, 'The Teacher calls you, venerable ones.'"

Responding, "As you say, lord," to the Blessed One, the monk went to those monks, and on arrival he said to them, "The Teacher calls you, venerable ones."

Responding, "As you say, my friend," to the monk, those monks went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side.

As they were sitting there, the Blessed One said to them, "Is it true, monks, that you are given to arguing and quarreling and disputing, stabbing one another with weapons of the mouth? That you don't persuade one another, and don't agree to be persuaded by one another? That you don't convince one another, and don't agree to be convinced by one another?"

"Yes, lord."

"And while you are given to arguing and quarreling and disputing, stabbing one another with weapons of the mouth, are you set on bodily acts of good will with regard to your companions in the holy life, to their faces & behind their backs? Are you set on verbal acts of good will with regard to your companions in the holy life, to their faces & behind their backs? Are you set on mental acts of good will with regard to your companions in the holy life, to their faces & behind their backs?"

"No, lord."

"So then, while you are given to arguing and quarreling and disputing, stabbing one another with weapons of the mouth, you are not set on bodily acts of good will with regard to your companions in the holy life, to their faces & behind their backs; you are not set on verbal acts of good will with regard to your companions in the holy life, to their faces & behind their backs; you are not set on mental acts of good will with regard to your companions in the holy life, to their faces & behind their backs. Then what could you worthless men possibly know or see that you are given to arguing and quarreling and disputing, stabbing one another with weapons of the mouth? That will be to your long-term harm and suffering."

Then the Blessed One addressed the monks: "Monks, these six are conditions that are conducive to amiability, that engender feelings of endearment, engender feelings of respect, leading to a sense of fellowship, a lack of disputes, harmony, & a state of unity. Which six?

“There is the case where a monk is set on bodily acts of good will with regard to his companions in the holy life, to their faces & behind their backs. This is a condition that is conducive to amiability, that engenders feelings of endearment, engenders feelings of respect, leading to a sense of fellowship, a lack of disputes, harmony, & a state of unity.

“And further, the monk is set on verbal acts of good will with regard to his companions in the holy life, to their faces & behind their backs. This, too, is a condition that is conducive to amiability, that engenders feelings of endearment, engenders feelings of respect, leading to a sense of fellowship, a lack of disputes, harmony, & a state of unity.

“And further, the monk is set on mental acts of good will with regard to his companions in the holy life, to their faces & behind their backs. This, too, is a condition that is conducive to amiability, that engenders feelings of endearment, engenders feelings of respect, leading to a sense of fellowship, a lack of disputes, harmony, & a state of unity.

“And further, whatever righteous gains the monk may obtain in a righteous way—even if only the alms in his bowl—he does not consume them alone. He consumes them after sharing them in common with his virtuous companions in the holy life. This, too, is a condition that is conducive to amiability, that engenders feelings of endearment, engenders feelings of respect, leading to a sense of fellowship, a lack of disputes, harmony, & a state of unity.

“And further—with reference to the virtues that are untorn, unbroken, unspotted, unsplattered, liberating, praised by the observant, ungrasped at, leading to concentration—the monk dwells with his virtue in tune with that of his companions in the holy life, to their faces & behind their backs. This, too, is a condition that is conducive to amiability, that engenders feelings of endearment, engenders feelings of respect, leading to a sense of fellowship, a lack of disputes, harmony, & a state of unity.

“And further—with reference to the view that is noble, leading outward, that leads those who act in accordance with it to the right ending of suffering & stress—the monk dwells with a view in tune with those of his companions in the holy life, to their faces & behind their backs. This, too, is a condition that is conducive to amiability, that engenders feelings of endearment, engenders feelings of respect, leading to a sense of fellowship, a lack of disputes, harmony, & a state of unity.

“These are the six conditions that are conducive to amiability, that engender feelings of endearment, engender feelings of respect, leading to a sense of fellowship, a lack of disputes, harmony, & a state of unity.

“Of these six conditions conducive to amiability, this is the summit, this the girding, this the kingpin: the view that is noble, leading outward, that leads those who act in accordance with it to the right ending of suffering & stress. Just as in a building with a ridged roof, this is the summit, this the girding, this the kingpin: the ridge beam; in the same way, of these six conditions conducive to amiability, this is the summit, this the girding, this the kingpin: the view that is noble, leading outward, that leads those who act in accordance with it to

the right ending of suffering & stress.2

“And how is there the view that is noble, leading outward, that leads those who act in accordance with it to the right ending of suffering & stress?

“There is the case where a monk, having gone to the wilderness, to the root of a tree, or to an empty dwelling, considers thus: ‘Is there any internal subjugation unabandoned in me that, subjugated by which, my subjugated mind would not know or see things as they have come to be?’ If a monk is subjugated by sensual passion, monks, then his mind is subjugated. If he is subjugated by ill will, then his mind is subjugated. If he is subjugated by sloth & torpor, then his mind is subjugated. If he is subjugated by restlessness & anxiety, then his mind is subjugated. If he is subjugated by uncertainty, then his mind is subjugated. If a monk is absorbed in speculation about this world, then his mind is subjugated. If a monk is absorbed in speculation about the other world, then his mind is subjugated. If a monk is given to arguing and quarreling and disputing, stabbing others with weapons of the mouth, then his mind is subjugated.

“He discerns that, ‘There is no subjugation unabandoned in me that, subjugated by which, my subjugated mind would not know and see things as they have come to be. My mind is well directed for awakening to the truths.’ This is the first knowledge attained by him that is noble, transcendent, not held in common with run-of-the-mill people.

“And further, the disciple of the noble ones considers thus: ‘When I cultivate, develop, and pursue this view, do I personally obtain tranquility, do I personally obtain unbinding?’

“He discerns that, ‘When I cultivate, develop, and pursue this view, I personally obtain tranquility, I personally obtain unbinding.’ This is the second knowledge attained by him that is noble, transcendent, not held in common with run-of-the-mill people.

“And further, the disciple of the noble ones considers thus: ‘Is there, outside of this (Dhamma & Vinaya), any other contemplative or brahman endowed with the sort of view with which I am endowed?’

“He discerns that, ‘There is no other contemplative or brahman outside (the Dhamma & Vinaya) endowed with the sort of view with which I am endowed.’ This is the third knowledge attained by him that is noble, transcendent, not held in common with run-of-the-mill people.

“And further, the disciple of the noble ones considers thus: ‘I am endowed with the character of a person consummate in view?’3 And what, monks, is the character of a person consummate in view? This is the character of a person consummate in view: Although he may commit some kind of offence for which a means of rehabilitation has been laid down, still he immediately confesses, reveals, and discloses it to the Teacher or to observant companions in the holy life; having done that, he undertakes restraint for the future. Just as a young, tender infant lying on his back, when he has hit a live ember with his hand or his foot, immediately draws back; in the same way, this is the character of a

person consummate in view: Although he may commit some kind of offence for which a means of rehabilitation has been laid down, still he immediately confesses, reveals, and discloses it to the Teacher or to observant companions in the holy life; having done that, he undertakes restraint for the future.

"He discerns that, 'I am endowed with the character of a person consummate in view.' This is the fourth knowledge attained by him that is noble, transcendent, not held in common with run-of-the-mill people.

"And further, the disciple of the noble ones considers thus: 'I am endowed with the character of a person consummate in view?' And what, monks, is the character of a person consummate in view? This is the character of a person consummate in view: Although he may be active in the various affairs of his companions in the holy life, he still has a keen regard for training in heightened virtue, training in heightened mind, & training in heightened discernment. Just as a cow with a new calf watches after her calf all the while she is grazing on grass, in the same way, this is the character of a person consummate in view: Although he may be active in the various affairs of his companions in the holy life, he still has a keen regard for training in heightened virtue, training in heightened mind, & training in heightened discernment.

"He discerns that, 'I am endowed with the character of a person consummate in view.' This is the fifth knowledge attained by him that is noble, transcendent, not held in common with run-of-the-mill people.

"And further, the disciple of the noble ones considers thus: 'I am endowed with the strength of a person consummate in view?' And what, monks, is the strength of a person consummate in view? This is the strength of a person consummate in view: When the Dhamma & Vinaya proclaimed by the Tathāgata is being taught, he heeds it, gives it attention, engages it with all his mind, hears the Dhamma with eager ears.

"He discerns that, 'I am endowed with the strength of a person consummate in view.' This is the sixth knowledge attained by him that is noble, transcendent, not held in common with run-of-the-mill people.

"And further, the disciple of the noble ones considers thus: 'I am endowed with the strength of a person consummate in view?' And what, monks, is the strength of a person consummate in view? This is the strength of a person consummate in view: When the Dhamma & Vinaya proclaimed by the Tathāgata is being taught, he gains understanding of the meaning, gains understanding of the Dhamma, gains gladness connected with the Dhamma.

"He discerns that, 'I am endowed with the strength of a person consummate in view.' This is the seventh knowledge attained by him that is noble, transcendent, not held in common with run-of-the-mill people.

“A disciple of the noble ones thus endowed with seven factors has well examined the character for the realization of the fruit of stream entry. A disciple of the noble ones thus endowed with seven factors is endowed with the fruit of stream entry.”

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, the monks delighted in the Blessed One’s words.

Notes

1. This is apparently not the same Kosambī quarrel as that described in Mv X. This quarrel seems to have been settled in Kosambī with the discourse the Buddha gives here. That quarrel was much harder to settle. The Buddha had to leave Kosambī and take up residence in Sāvatthī before the monks in Kosambī came to their senses, followed him to Sāvatthī, and settled their differences there.

2. SN 48:52 contains a similar image, applied to the five faculties, to make the point that the lower, supporting faculties are not solid until the highest faculty—discernment—is in place, just as the rafters in the roof of a ridge-roofed building are not stable or firm until the ridge-beam is in place.

3. In this and the remaining three considerations, the words of the consideration follow the syntax of a declarative sentence, but the context seems to require a question. There are other instances in the Canon where this happens, suggesting that—as in, say, English or French—a native speaker of Pali could phrase a question in the declarative, indicating the question by the tone of voice.

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: DN 16; SN 48:53; AN 3:74; AN 5:179; AN 6:12; AN 10:92